

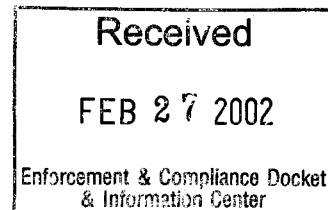
RHODE ISLAND

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

235 Promenade Street, Providence, RI 02908-5767 TDD 401-831-5508

February 27, 2002

United States Environmental Protection Agency  
Enforcement and Compliance Docket and Information Center  
Mail Code 2201A  
Attn: Docket #EC-2000-007  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20460



*SUBJECT: Selected States' Comments on Proposed EPA Cross-Media Electronic Reporting and Records Rule (CROMERRR); Docket #EC-2000-007*

Dear Sir / Madam:

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the United States Environmental Protection Agency's proposed Cross-Media Electronic Reporting and Records Rule (CROMERRR).

Rhode Island continues to work with EPA in coordination with other States through the Environmental Council of States (ECOS) and the National Governor's Association (NGA), on a variety of cooperative workgroups addressing Electronic Commerce and Electronic Data Interchange issues. We have also participated in ECOS facilitated discussions among many states on the proposed electronic reporting requirements. Rather than submit individual comments, we fully support the ECOS letter of comments, which demonstrates our critical concerns with this proposed rule. We believe these comments should be addressed before implementing this rule.

Rhode Island participants included Programmatic, Information Management and Legal staff who assisted in crafting comments to reflect a desire to promote electronic reporting of data in a more flexible manner, but, one that will result in the collection of enforceable and legally-defensible information. For this to be achieved, it is imperative that performance-based criteria be established instead of technology-based requirements, since technology is in an almost constant state of flux. The proposed rule, however, would impose rigid legal and technical requirements that would likely discourage electronic reporting. This concern is most pronounced for the record-keeping part of the proposed rule where requirements go beyond current requirements for the same information if it were submitted on paper. We are also concerned that this mandatory nature of the proposed rule runs contrary to the voluntary nature of the Exchange Network (and associated \$25million grant program) and may negatively influence much of the excellent cooperative work being done between EPA and many states. We believe the successes of this cooperative work should be used as a model for EPA and states to achieve our common goal of reliable data and electronic interchange mechanisms.

We look forward to any opportunity to participate in further discussions on these or other state comments on proposed rule language.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'Jan H. Reitsma', written over a series of horizontal lines that resemble musical staves. The signature is stylized and somewhat cursive.

Jan H. Reitsma,  
Director